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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/15/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: SEX, SUICIDE AND DVDS PART II: MORE SMOKE, SOME
FIRE?

REF: ATHENS 0023

Classified By: A/Political Counselor Jeff Hovenier for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

SUMMARY

11. (C) The scandal involving former Culture Ministry
Secretary General Christos Zahopoulos (reftel) continues to

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dominate headlines and television news shows throughout
Greece. Lurid photos of Zahopoulos and Evi Tsekou, a former
contract employee at the Culture Ministry, supposedly taken
from the DVD -- or perhaps police files -- were published in
a weekly newspaper; there are also public allegations that
the paper's co-owner was implicated in the affair. More
significantly, investigators have summoned the head of the
Prime Minister's Press Office and the head of the PM's
Political Office to testify in the case. The continued
strength of the story is fueling increased public skepticism
of the Prime Minister's anti-corruption pledges. End summary.

A Story with Legs (and some other body parts)

12. (C) Despite the government's fervent wish to the contrary,
the Zahopoulos scandal continues to dominate headlines and TV
news programs. Lurid photographs of Zahopoulos and Tsekou
were published in weekly sensationalist newspaper "Proto
Thema," to the consternation of many. Some media outlets
have identified "Proto Thema's" co-owner, Themis
Anastassiadis, as the source of the DVD provided to the PM's
office prior to Zahopoulos' suicide attempt. The allegations
attracted greater notice when Anastassiadis was found to have
recently deposited 5 million Euro into a French bank account.
Anastassiadis has publicly denied that the money had
anything to do with the Zahopoulos affair, adding that his
annual income is 15 million Euro, and therefore it was
perfectly legitimate for him to have deposited such a large
sum. We have heard from media sources (and the PASOK
opposition party's spokesman has openly speculated) that the
Government had been investigating Anastassiadis for money
laundering, and that he provided the DVD to the government to
obtain a less robust investigation into his financial
dealings. The Greek Special Audits Service is now
investigating Anastassiadis' transactions. Meanwhile, the
other "Proto Thema" co-owner has been "fired" by the paper's
employees.

13. (U) Government spokesman Theodoros Roussopoulos confirmed
that the head of the PM's press office Yannis Andrianos had
been recalled by the examining magistrate to provide
"supplementary evidence of vital significance." The press
has reported that Andrianos has rescinded his claim of

journalist-source privilege and has revealed the identity of the individual who provided the DVD to him; however, there has been no leak of whom Andrianos identified. The examining magistrate also summoned the Director of the Prime Minister's Political Office, Yannis Angelou. While the exact nature of his testimony is unknown, press reports speculated that he was asked to clarify the testimony provided by Andrianos.

¶4. (U) Finally, Zahopoulos remains in the ICU after his attempted suicide, but has come out of sedation and is reportedly responding to questions with finger movements. Theodoros Dravillis has been appointed to Zahopoulos' former position as Secretary General at the Ministry of Culture.

Comment - Skepticism Growing

¶5. (C) Although the scandal has had little real impact on the Karamanlis government thus far, it has fueled public skepticism about the government and the Prime Minister's frequent pledges of a zero tolerance policy for corruption. Although both Karamanlis and PASOK leader Pappandreu took the high road at Monday's Transparency International conference here, the opposition has seized on the affair, demanding public investigation of all aspects and taking every possible opportunity to link it to what it calls a general air of corruption within the New Democracy leadership and Karamanlis' failure to take any serious steps to curb corrupt practices. The opposition also relishes pointing out that Zahopoulos is one of Karamanlis' known close confidants and that two of Karamanlis' senior advisors have had to testify before the investigating magistrate. End Comment.
SPECKHARD